

PART II

Population

Where Washington's People Live

Because of the influences of topography, climate, accessibility, and recent industrialization, Washington's population is distributed unevenly throughout the state. Over two-thirds of the people live in the western portion, concentrated largely in the industrial cities of Puget Sound. The Olympic Mountains and Willapa Hills of the Coast Range and the Cascade Mountains stand out as sparsely populated areas in western Washington. The Willamett-Puget Sound Lowland, extending from Vancouver on the Columbia River northward to Bellingham near the Canadian border, is the major population belt of the state. It contains a fairly well-distributed rural population on its river deltas and rolling, glacial drift plains.

The mountains, hills, plateaus, irrigable valleys, and dry climatic conditions cause a generally clustered pattern of population settlement in eastern Washington. Mountainous areas including the eastern Cascade Mountain slope, the Okanogan Highlands, the Blue Mountains, and the Selkirks have but few people. Dryland and upland areas which cannot be irrigated, such as large portions of the Waterville Plateau, the Channelled Scablands, and the hills of Yakima County, are thinly settled. Both rural and urban population is concentrated in the irrigated Yakima, Kittitas, Wenatchee, Okanogan and Walla Walla Valleys and in the Pasco and Quincy Basins. In the far eastern section--the Palouse Hills--the uniform soil, topography and moderate rainfall permits a more evenly distributed population. The industrialized Spokane metropolitan area and the rich agricultural Yakima Valley are the major population clusters of eastern Washington.

Growth of Population

Washington was explored by Spanish, Russian, British, and American expeditions between 1592 and 1805, but no settlement occurred until 1810. Ownership of the area was disputed by America and Great Britain. A compromise, the Joint Occupancy Treaty of 1818, permitted both American and British fur traders and settlers to live north of the Columbia River. British interests (the Northwest Company and the Hudson's Bay Company) established fur trading posts at Spokane and Walla Walla in 1810 and 1818. American claims were strengthened by the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1805) and by the settlements at Fort Spokane, Okanogan, and Astoria by the Pacific Fur Company. The British increased their influence as they established agricultural settlements at Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually between 1824 and 1833. Settlement by Americans north of the Columbia, although permitted by treaty, was discouraged by the Hudson's Bay Company which desired to maintain its fur trade monopoly.

A growing tide of American land settlers over the Oregon Trail during the 1840's changed the balance of control in favor of the United States. Most of the Americans settled in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Unhindered by the British, several hundred American settlers moved northward across the Columbia into the Puget Sound country and soon outnumbered the British fur traders.

The conflict of interests was solved by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which gave the United States the present area of Washington and established the Canadian boundary as it exists today. Oregon Territory (including all of the present state of Washington) was created in 1848 by Congress, with its capitol in Salem, Oregon. Settlers north of the Columbia met in 1851 at the Monticello Convention in present Longview, Washington, and asked for a separate territorial government. Washington Territory was created March 2, 1851, with a capitol at Olympia on Puget Sound. Isaac I. Stevens was appointed as Governor.

Population growth was slow before 1860. Lack of roads, the long distance from the East, and the difficulty of clearing the dense forests of the Puget Sound country kept immigration to a minimum. Indian hostility prevented settlement in most of eastern Washington prior to 1858, and that tended to slow movement into the Puget Sound Basin. The Washington population was only 11,594 according to the 1860 Census.

In 1863, the Washington territorial boundaries were changed to the present state lines by the creation of Idaho Territory. The Census of 1870 was the first to follow the present boundaries, and it enumerated a population of 23,995.

Population grew rapidly from 1870 to 1890. New transcontinental railroads brought large waves of immigrants from the East and Europe. The completion of the Union Pacific to the Columbia River brought new settlers into southeastern Washington. When the Northern Pacific reached Spokane in 1880 and was continued on toward Puget Sound, settlers occupied the Palouse and Big Bend wheat lands and the Yakima Valley. In 1883, six new counties were created in eastern Washington. Expansion of coastwise shipping and lumbering built up the cities on Puget Sound and at Grays Harbor. Washington Territory was admitted to the Union as a state in 1889. The population at that time was 350,000.

The period 1900-1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the state gained 624,000 persons, more than doubling to 1,111,990. Two other railroads, Great Northern and Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul, reached Puget Sound in 1893 and 1909, respectively. The lumber industry and agriculture supported more people; large volumes of lumber and wheat were being exported by ship and rail. Many land and timber seekers homesteaded free public domain lands in the mountainous areas. The Alaskan gold rush doubled Seattle's population within a decade. Railroads and ships brought large numbers of people from Europe, who took up lumbering, fishing, mining, and agriculture. Ranked numerically according to the 1920 Census, the largest foreign-born groups in the state were Canadians (42,000), Swedes (35,000), Norwegians (34,000), English (23,000), Germans (22,000), Italians (18,000), Finns (12,500), Russians (11,000), and Irish (9,000).

Between 1910 and 1940 population grew at a slower but steady rate. The increase was about 20,000 per year. The lumber industry began to decline after 1929. Reduced employment and a growing scarcity of land were reflected in a slower rate of population growth. However, during the 1930's, many farmers from the Great Plains drought areas moved overland to Washington seeking farming opportunities.

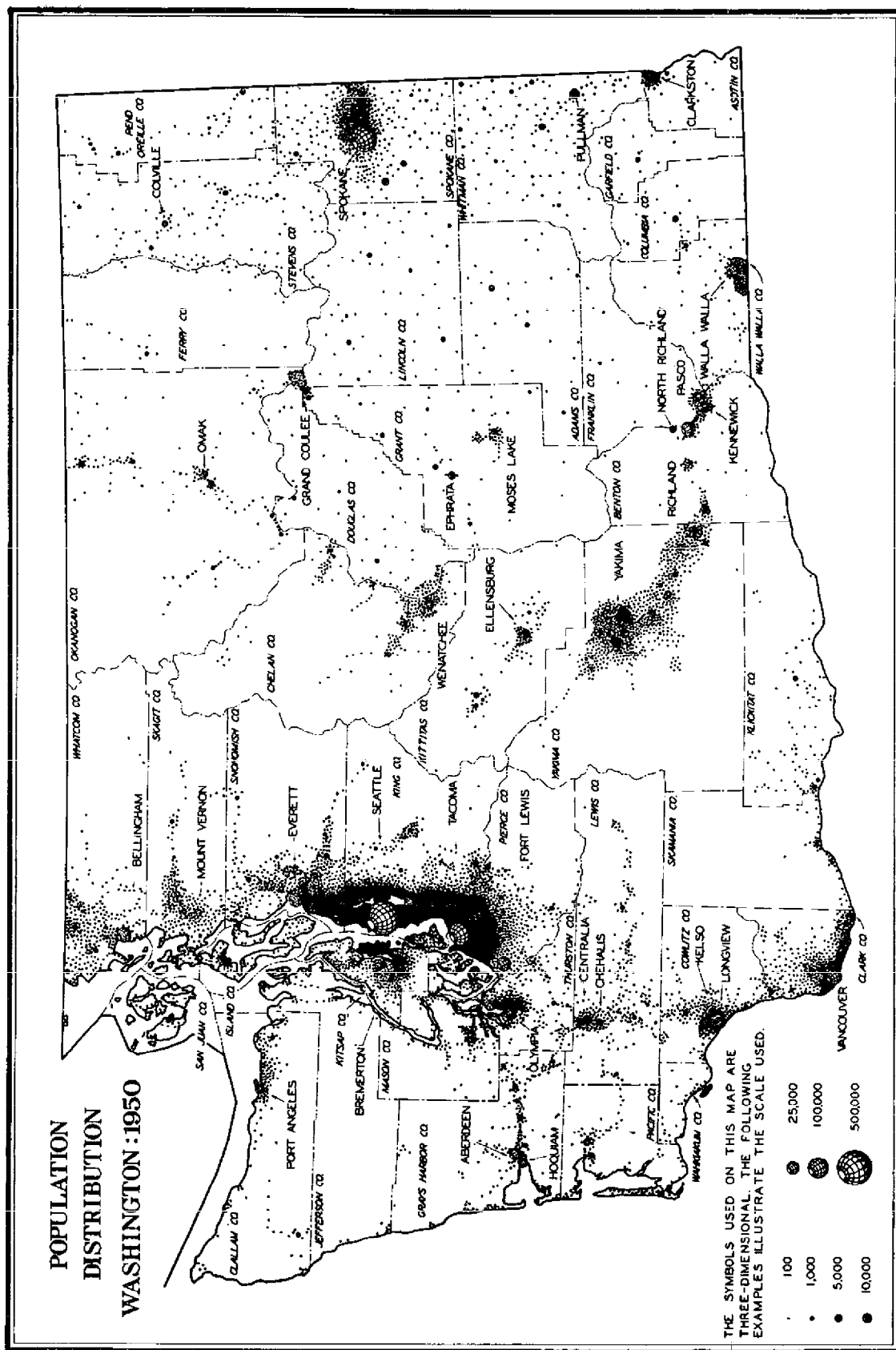
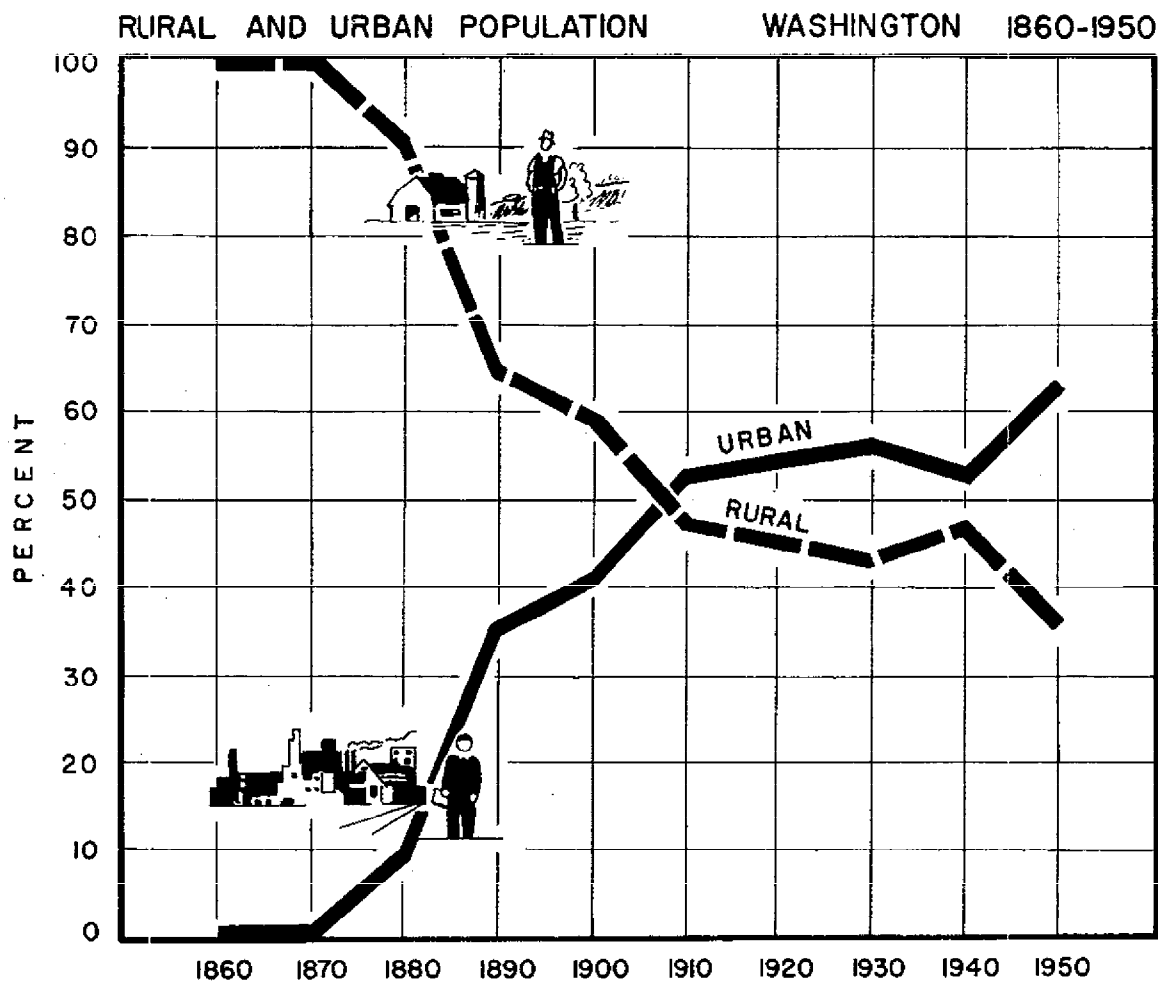
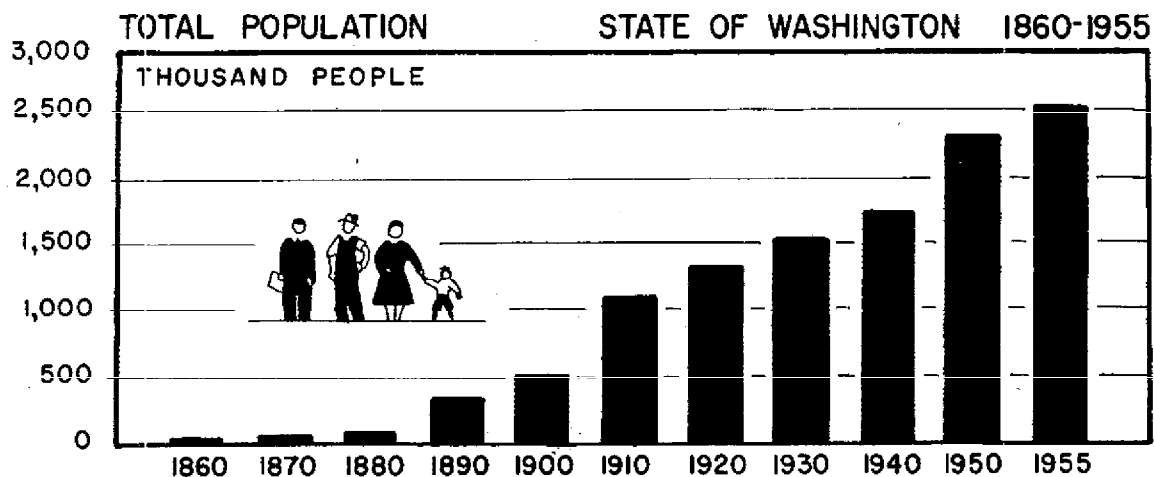


Figure 6.- DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN WASHINGTON, 1950 (Map by courtesy of Population Research Office, Washington State Census Board).



SOURCES OF DATA: U.S. Census 1860-1950; Washington State Census Board, Estimate - 1955.

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The 1940-1950 decade brought the greatest increase in Washington history. Primarily an overland movement of laborers to new defense industries, it resulted in an increase of 642,772 in ten years, raising the state population to 2,378,963 in 1950. Most of the new growth was in the industrial metropolitan districts in King, Pierce, Kitsap, Clark and Spokane Counties and at the Federal atomic works in Benton County.

Urban and Rural Population

In 1870 the entire population of Washington was living in rural areas--in villages and on farms. By 1900, 211,477 of the population of Washington, or 40.8 percent, were living in urban areas. In 1950, according to the Census definition of "urban" which includes residents of towns of 2,500 and larger, 1,503,166 persons, or 63.2 percent, were living in urban areas. And over 52 percent lived in three standard metropolitan areas comprised of Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane and their surrounding suburban cities and towns. This trend follows the national pattern.

Table 1.- Population of Washington
1860-1955

| Year | Population |
|------|------------|
| 1860 | 11,594 |
| 1870 | 23,955 |
| 1880 | 75,116 |
| 1890 | 357,232 |
| 1900 | 518,103 |
| 1910 | 1,141,990 |
| 1920 | 1,356,621 |
| 1930 | 1,563,396 |
| 1940 | 1,736,191 |
| 1950 | 2,378,963 |
| 1955 | 2,580,000 |

Sources: U.S. Census, Population;
Washington State Census
Board, April 1, 1955
Estimate.

Bellingham (35,700), Everett (34,100), Bremerton (32,200), Walla Walla (25,400) and Longview (23,500).

Population of Spokane County

Population has increased with each census since 1880. With the large amount of industry and commerce concentrated in the city of Spokane, the population has been about three-fourths urban since 1910. In 1955 an estimated 189,670 people were living within cities of 2,500 and larger. Another 66,230 persons were classed as rural, living in cities and villages, along highways, in suburbs and on farms. The rural-farm population (persons living on and operating farms) was only 6 percent of the total. Only 12,269 persons, or about 6 out of each 100 residents in Spokane County lived on farms according

The rural population is predominantly rural nonfarm, consisting of 602,026 persons who live in the country, but do not operate farms. The rural farm population decreased about one-fifth between 1940 and 1950, and numbered only 273,771, or 11.5 percent of the state's total 1950 population of 2,378,963. As a result of the farm-to-city trend in Washington, about one person in ten is living on a farm and about six persons out of ten are living in a town or city larger than 2,500.

According to the 1955 estimates of the Washington Census Board, the ten leading cities of Washington ranked as follows: Seattle (555,000), Spokane (182,000), Tacoma (156,000), Yakima (43,000), Vancouver (41,950),

to the 1950 Census. In farm population Spokane ranked eighth among Washington counties in 1950. Since 1920 there has been a trend of migration to the city from the farms as mechanization of grain farming and consolidation of farms have created a surplus of labor. Higher wages and steadier employment in Spokane and other Pacific Northwest cities have also attracted many farm youths.

Table 2.- Population of Spokane County
1860-1955

| Census Year | Population | Percent Rural | Percent Urban |
|-------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1860 | 996 | 100 | 0 |
| 1870 | 1/ | | |
| 1880 | 4,262 | 100 | 0 |
| 1890 | 37,487 | 46.9 | 53.1 |
| 1900 | 57,542 | 36.0 | 64.0 |
| 1910 | 139,404 | 25.2 | 74.8 |
| 1920 | 141,289 | 26.1 | 73.9 |
| 1930 | 150,477 | 23.2 | 76.8 |
| 1940 | 164,652 | 25.9 | 74.1 |
| 1950 | 221,561 | 24.5 | 75.5 |
| 1955 2/ | 255,900 | 25.9 | 74.1 |

1/ In 1864 Spokane County was reorganized as part of Stevens County until 1879.

2/ Washington State Census Board, estimate April 1, 1955.

Sources: U.S. Census, Population.
Washington State Census Board.

Table 3.- Population of Incorporated Places
Spokane County, 1910-1955

| Incorporated City or Town | 1910 | 1920 | 1930 | 1940 | 1950 | 1955 1/ |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Cheney | 1,207 | 1,252 | 1,335 | 1,551 | 2,797 | 2,856 |
| Deer Park | 875 | 1,103 | 1,009 | 1,070 | 1,167 | 1,266 |
| Fairfield | 308 | 413 | 381 | 364 | 369 | 382 |
| Latah | 339 | 330 | 284 | 270 | 244 | 240 |
| Medical Lake | 927 | 1,254 | 1,671 | 2,114 | 4,488 | 4,814 |
| Millwood | -- | -- | 493 | 717 | 1,240 | 1,710 |
| Rockford | 663 | 435 | 381 | 377 | 360 | 342 |
| Spangle | 299 | 291 | 218 | 203 | 242 | 245 |
| Spokane | 104,402 | 104,437 | 115,514 | 122,001 | 161,721 | 182,000 |
| Waverley | 318 | 234 | 151 | 131 | 120 | 115 |

1/ Populations for 1955 are estimates of the Washington State Census Board, April 1, 1955.

Sources: U.S. Census, Population.
Washington State Census Board.

With the exception of those located in the grain farming region of southern Spokane County, the incorporated cities and villages have grown during the last 45 years. The southern farm towns--Fairfield, Latah, Rockford, Spangle and Waverley--have less population than they had in 1910 and 1920. The more industrialized and commercial cities and towns of the central and northern part closer to Spokane have added population. The city of Spokane has grown by 78,000 since 1910, Cheney by 1,649 and Medical Lake by 3,790. Deer Park and the suburban city of Millwood also show considerable gains in recent censuses.

Spokane County has been a melting pot of many immigrants from foreign lands. In 1890 nearly one-fourth of the population was from foreign countries. Canada, Scandinavian countries, Germany and Italy have been most important sources of immigrants. Germans were the most prominent before 1890. Swedish immigrants were second to Canadians by 1920. The percentage of foreign-born white population decreased sharply after 1920 partly as a result of more restrictive federal immigration laws. In addition to the European and Canadian nationalities in Table 4, the 1950 Census tabulated 418 American Indians. The second largest American-Japanese population in the state, 1,171 persons, also live in Spokane County. American Negroes numbered 1,359 in 1950 and were nearly all living in the City of Spokane, employed in industrial and service trade occupations.

Table 4.- Foreign-Born White Population, Spokane County
1890, 1920 and 1950

| Country of Birth | 1890 | 1920 | 1950 |
|----------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| England and Wales... | 812 | 2,176 | 1,330 |
| Scotland..... | 274 | 717 | 430 |
| Northern Ireland.... | -- | -- | 7 |
| Ireland (Eire)..... | 822 | 939 | 339 |
| Norway..... | 779 | 1,941 | 1,225 |
| Sweden..... | 1,294 | 3,317 | 1,930 |
| Denmark..... | 229 | 677 | 353 |
| Netherlands..... | 21 | 236 | 145 |
| Switzerland..... | 161 | 325 | -- |
| France..... | 111 | 247 | 106 |
| Germany..... | 2,023 | 3,089 | 1,527 |
| Poland..... | 10 | 248 | 172 |
| Czechoslovakia..... | 25 | -- | 107 |
| Austria..... | 87 | 373 | 320 |
| Yugoslavia..... | -- | 149 | 183 |
| Russia (U.S.S.R.)... | 73 | 671 | 635 |
| Finland..... | -- | 205 | 172 |
| Italy..... | 99 | 1,216 | 1,015 |
| Canada-French..... | -- | 181 | 226 |
| Canada-Other..... | 1,665 | 4,613 | 4,333 |
| All other countries. | 474 | 927 | 1,209 |
| Totals | 8,959 | 22,247 | 15,764 |
| Percent foreign-born | 23.9 | 15.7 | 7.1 |

Source: U.S. Census, Population

Agriculture ranked only fifth in employment according to the 1950 Census. There were 79,347 employed workers of which the largest group, 21,727, were in miscellaneous service occupations followed closely by 20,205 in retail and wholesale stores. Only 4,101 were earning wages and salaries paid by farmers or gaining income from self-employment on farms. In the working force of Spokane County 5 persons out of each 100 were engaged in agriculture in 1950.

Table 5.- Employment of the Population
Spokane County, 1950

| Types of Employment | Male Workers | Female Workers | Total Workers |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <u>Total employed workers</u> | 56,411 | 22,933 | 79,347 |
| Agriculture | 3,708 | 393 | 4,101 |
| Forestry and fisheries | 94 | 8 | 102 |
| Mining | 214 | 27 | 241 |
| Construction | 5,698 | 172 | 5,870 |
| Manufacturing | 10,557 | 1,685 | 12,242 |
| Transportation | 6,632 | 451 | 7,083 |
| Retail and wholesale stores | 13,097 | 7,108 | 20,205 |
| Miscellaneous services | 10,701 | 11,026 | 21,727 |
| Public administration (government employment) | 3,140 | 715 | 3,855 |
| Other employment | 2,573 | 1,348 | 3,921 |

Source: U.S. Census, Population.